



FRNSC 801: Criminalistics III Spring 2021

INSTRUCTOR:	Mike Kusluski
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Phone:	814-863-6769
Office:	325A Whitmore Lab
Office hours:	by appointment
Class location:	Online (zoom.psu.edu) FSAT Test only: Millennium Science Complex, Rm. N205
Days & time:	Monday & Wednesday 6:00 – 7:55 PM
Brief course Description:	Advanced CSI investigation, criminalistics and scene reconstruction with mock courtroom testimony. Classroom discussions will expand on the analysis of commonly encountered evidence to demonstrate its usefulness in criminal investigations.
Prerequisites:	FRNSC 411, FRNSC 413, FRNSC 415W
Concurrent:	FRNSC 421W, FRNSC 427W
Course management:	CANVAS will be used for communication and posting course material.

Pandemic-Specific Policies:

Course Format

This course is designated as a remote/in-person hybrid. However, with exception of the FSAT test, the course will be conducted exclusively online. The administration of the FSAT test is required by the American Board of Criminalistics to be conducted in-person. As long as health conditions permit, this test will be conducted in-person, with social distancing, face masks and any other necessary health precautions as proscribed by PSU.

Pennsylvania State University guarantees all students the right to attend 100% remotely. If you have any concerns regarding in-person attendance, please consult the instructor as soon as possible.

Course Delivery

Because the majority of this course involves group work, it will be delivered live from 6:00 PM – 7:55 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays. Certain class sessions may be recorded and will be available to students for review afterward.

Mask Wearing and Social Distancing

We know from existing data that wearing a mask in public can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the community (Lyu & Wehby, 2020; CDC, 2020; Johns Hopkins Medicine, 2020). In accordance with PA Department of Health regulations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Pennsylvania State University has determined that everyone will be required to wear a face mask in university buildings, including classrooms. You MUST wear a mask appropriately (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) and social distance in the building if you are attending class in person. Masks have been provided for students, instructors, and staff, and everyone is expected to wear one. Students who do not wear a mask properly will be reminded once. Any additional noncompliance will result in removal from class and a referral to the PSU Office of Student Conduct.

Attendance and Participation

Because this course is being conducted online, participation is an essential requirement of attendance. Students are expected to log on before the start of class, remain online and participate for the entire session.

Accommodation for Unforeseen Circumstances

The instructor will make every possible effort to accommodate the student learning experience and to complete the objectives of this course. Students are asked to do the same.

Office Hours

Students are encouraged to speak with the instructor if they have any questions or issues. All office hours will be conducted remotely this semester. Please email the instructor to set up a time to meet on Zoom.

Course Learning Objectives:

The primary goals of this course are to:

- Finalize each student's education in criminalistics and forensic science through case studies, exercises (hands-on and problem sets), lectures, and examinations
- Assess the criminalistics and forensic science knowledge, skills, and abilities of each student
- Prepare each student to sit for the Forensic Science Assessment Test (FSAT) offered by the American Board of Criminalistics (ABC).
- Graduating students should possess the requisite skills to effectively manage the various types of physical evidence encountered at the crime scene and in the laboratory.

Students will be expected to build upon the knowledge and skills learned in previous courses. This course will emphasize and reinforce the importance of a holistic approach to the scientific investigation of crimes and other incidents. The integration of the different scientific disciplines is the foundation of the generalist philosophy in criminalistics, which forms the cornerstone of the American Board of Criminalistics certification process and upon which the FSAT is modeled. The significance of this strategy, when applied to the recognition, documentation, collection, control, and analysis of physical evidence from the scene to the courtroom, will be stressed. Advanced concepts and problems will be explored throughout the course and critical, scientific thought processes will be underscored with case examples. The majority of the course will rely on the ability of each student to read and comprehend the assigned readings in advance of classroom lectures. Problem sets and examinations (written and/ or practical) will be utilized to assess progress throughout the course.

Required textbooks: All textbooks used in Penn State Forensic Science program courses including, but not limited to, FRNSC 100, 210, 410, 411, 413, 415W, 421, and 427W

Suggested Reading:

- Chisum WJ, Turvey BE. Crime reconstruction. 2nd ed. Amsterdam: Elsevier Academic Press, 2011.
- Committee on Identifying the Needs of the Forensic Science Community/National Research Council. Strengthening forensic science in the United States: a path forward. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 2009.
<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/228091.pdf>
- Horswell J, editor. The practice of crime scene investigation. London: Taylor & Francis, 2004.
- Inman K, Rudin R. Principles and practice of criminalistics: the profession of forensic science. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2001.

Course Syllabus Modifications:

Changes to the syllabus, class schedule, announcements, etc. will be communicated in class, via email and/or on CANVAS. Students are required to check their Penn State and CANVAS e-mail daily.

Information Literacy

Students will recognize when research is required and will have the ability to access, analyze, integrate, and evaluate information from a variety of sources. These sources include, but are not limited to, Penn State library databases, published and other written materials, as well as computer sources (Internet, databases, etc.). If students encounter difficulty obtaining specific source materials, the instructor may be of assistance upon request.

Expected Course Behavior:

- Students are expected to be actively involved in their acquisition of knowledge. Every student is responsible for all assigned reading, material presented in class, and computer-assisted and delivered instructional material.
- All students are expected to behave ethically and with honor and integrity (see Academic Integrity Policy).
- Cell phones and other smart devices **MUST BE SILENCED AT ALL TIMES.**
- Texting during class will result in the student being asked to leave and the student will be counted as absent.
- Behavior deemed as disruptive to the instructor or fellow students (i.e., cell phone use, texting, excessive chatting, etc.) may result in the student being asked to leave. If you are asked to leave, you will be counted as absent for the entire class. If the behavior continues, the instructor has the right to ask that the student be removed from the course.

American Board of Criminalistics (ABC) Forensic Science Assessment Test (FSAT)

As outlined by the ABC*, a qualified student candidate must:

- Understand the major scientific principles behind forensic science analysis.
- Understand how to recognize, collect, secure, and preserve physical evidence.
- Understand how to perform physical, chemical, and/or biological analyses to locate and identify items having evidential value.
- Understand how to interpret and compare analytical data generated from the analyses of physical/chemical evidence and known exemplars.
- Understand how to recognize the potential for forensic examinations in areas outside an area of specialization, prioritize the sequence of examinations, and handle evidence accordingly.
- Evaluate the appropriateness and/or the appropriate method of securing samples.
- Understand the use of laboratory instrumentation.
- Observe safe practices to ensure the safety of analysts.
- Understand legal processes including courtroom testimony, relevant legal decisions and concepts.
- Recognize and employ quality assurance measures to ensure the integrity of the analyses.
- Understand the importance of impartial and ethical work practices.

*https://www.criminalistics.com/uploads/3/2/3/3/32334973/fsat_study_guide_v1_1.pdf

ABC FSAT Study Guide v1.1 January 2014 (accessed 23JUL2020)

Changes to the FSAT Test: Until recently, the FSAT test was developed using the same question pool as the ABC General Knowledge Exam (Comprehensive Criminalistics). In 2018, the FSAT test was updated with a new pool of test questions submitted by forensic science faculty from FEPAC-accredited programs. However, the study guide has not been updated and may not reflect all of the material included in the new version of the test. The existing ABC study guide lists a set of recommended reference materials for study preparation (below). However, the new questions were drawn from *any* authoritative source. Students should not limit their test preparation to the references listed below, especially for those references viewed as authoritative in the discipline.

FSAT references:

Crime Scene

- Fisher BAJ. Techniques of crime scene investigation. 7th ed. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2004. Criminalistics and Forensic Science
- Houck M, Siegel J. Fundamentals of forensic science. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press, 2006.
- Saferstein R. Criminalistics: an introduction to forensic science. 7th ed. (or higher). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.
- Saferstein R, editor. Forensic science handbook, volume I. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002.
- Saferstein R, editor. Forensic science handbook, volume II. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.
- Saferstein R, editor. Forensic science handbook, volume III. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993.

Forensic Chemistry

- Bell S. Forensic chemistry. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006.

Forensic DNA

- Butler J. Forensic DNA typing. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2001.

Professional Conduct and Ethics

- American Board of Criminalistics. Rules of professional conduct. http://www.criminalistics.com/uploads/3/2/3/3/32334973/form_09-0001f_abc_rules_of_professional_conduct.pdf

Assessments

Assessment	Points
Reconstruction Exercise	100
Mock Trial <i>Voir Dire</i> Exercise	50
Mock Trial Direct Testimony Exercise	50
Mock Trial Cross Examination Exercise	50
LinkedIn.com profile	50
Job Posting Analysis	50
Resume (draft)	50
Resume (final)	50
Cover Letter (job specific)	50
Mock Job Interview	200
Case Study Progress Updates (4 @ 25 pts each)	100
Case Study Presentation 1	100
Case Study Presentation 2	100
Total Points	1000

- Students are responsible for keeping a back-up copy of all submitted take-home work.
- All assignments are due on the date and time specified unless otherwise determined by the instructor (see Late Submission of Assignments).
- Additional requirements/instructions may be given at the time an assessment is assigned

Grades

A	93% to 100%
A-	90% to 92%
B+	87% to 89%
B	83% to 86%
B-	80% to 82%
C+	77% to 79%
C	70% to 76%
D	60% to 69%
F	less than 60%

Fractions of a percent will only be rounded up from the one-tenth percent value to an integer value (for example, 89.50% = 90% but 89.49% = 89%)

Late Submission of Assignments

- 10% deduction/day
- Maximum deduction = 100%
- Extensions may be granted for exigent circumstances (documentation may be requested)
- Presentation slides must be submitted to the instructor no later than 11:59 PM the day immediately preceding the scheduled presentation.
- Slides must be submitted as a single PDF file, one slide per page.
- Files must be submitted via e-mail or file-sharing provider; e.g., CANVAS, Dropbox.com, etc.

Attendance

- The instructor reserves the right to require written documentation of any event(s) leading to missed classes (funerals, hospitalization, physician's office visit, etc.).
- If a student is absent, they will be responsible for all content that has been covered on that day. This includes lecture content, announcements, assignments, and any other material distributed to the class. The student is also responsible to be prepared for the next class.
- Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions (refer to University Faculty Senate Policy 42-27: Class Attendance for further information). Recurrent attendance issues will result in deductions from the final course score.
- Two (2) unexcused absences: 10% deduction
- Three (3) unexcused absences: 25% deduction
- Four (4) unexcused absences: 40% deduction
- NOTE: Two late arrivals (> 5 minutes) equal one unexcused absence

Academic Integrity

All Penn State policies regarding ethics and honorable behavior apply to this course (see links below for policy statements). Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. All University policies regarding academic integrity apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. For any material or ideas obtained from other sources, such as the text or things you see on the web, in the library, etc., a source reference must be given. Direct quotes from any source must be identified as such. All examination answers must be your own, and you must not provide any assistance to other students during examinations. Any instances of academic dishonesty WILL be pursued under the University and Eberly College of Science regulations concerning academic integrity.

Discussion of course concepts and cooperative study are encouraged; however, collaboration, discussion, assistance, cheating, plagiarism, etc., are NOT permitted during examinations or other assignments as specified by the instructor. Integrity and ethics are considered exceptionally important by the instructor.

Code of Mutual Respect

The Code of Mutual Respect and Cooperation was developed to embody the values that we hope our faculty, staff, and students possess, consistent with the aspirational goals expressed in the Penn State Principles. The University is strongly committed to freedom of expression, and consequently, the Code does not constitute University or College policy, and is not intended to interfere in any way with an individual's academic or personal freedoms. We hope, however, that individuals will voluntarily endorse the 12 principles set forth in the Code, thereby helping us make the Eberly College of Science a place where every individual feels respected and valued, as well as challenged and rewarded.

Disability Accommodations

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) Web site provides contact information for every Penn State campus: <http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>. For further information, please visit Student Disability Resources Web site: [http:// equity.psu.edu/sdr](http://equity.psu.edu/sdr).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS): 814-863-0395

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week):

877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week):

Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity and Bias Reporting

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>).

Mandated Reporting (Title IX)

Penn State's policies require faculty to share information about incidents of sex-based discrimination and harassment (discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and retaliation) with Penn State's Title IX coordinator or deputy coordinators, regardless of whether the incidents are stated in person or shared by students as part of their coursework. For more information regarding the University's policies and procedures for responding to reports of sexual or gender-based harassment or misconduct, please visit [http:// titleix.psu.edu](http://titleix.psu.edu). Additionally, faculty members are required to report on any reasonable suspicion of child abuse in accordance with the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law.

WEEK	DATES	LECTURE/ACTIVITY	DUE
1	Jan 18	No Classes: MLK Day	
	Jan 20	Lecture 1: Course Introduction	
2	Jan 25	Lecture 2: Case Integration	
	Jan 27	Lecture 3: Crime Scene Reconstruction	Progress Meeting #1
3	Feb 1	Group Meeting: Reconstruction Exercise	
	Feb 3	Lecture 4: Ethics and Bias/Court Testimony Review	Reconstruction Exercise Part 1
4	Feb 8	Mock Trial – Voir Dire Exercise	
	Feb 10	Mock Trial – Direct Testimony Exercise	
5	Feb 15	Mock Trial Cross Examination Exercise	Reconstruction Exercise Part 2
	Feb 17	Lecture 5: Resume Writing and Professional Conduct	
6	Feb 22	Lecture 6: Interview Skills and Internships	LinkedIn.com Profile
	Feb 24	Lecture 7: Early Career: Training and First Years	Job Posting Analysis
7	Mar 1	Mock Interviews	Resume (draft)
	Mar 3	Mock Interviews	
8	Mar 8	Mock Interview Feedback	Resume (final) and Cover Letter
	Mar 10	Group Meeting: Case Study	
9	Mar 15	Group Meeting: Case Study	Progress Meeting #2
	Mar 17	Group Meeting: Case Study	Progress Meeting #3
10	Mar 22	Group Meeting: Case Study	Progress Meeting #4
	Mar 24	Case Study Presentations	
11	Mar 29	Case Study Presentations	
	Mar 31	Case Study Presentations	
12	Apr 5	Lecture 8: Overview of Forensic Science Organizations	
	Apr 7	Wellness Day – No Classes	
13	Apr 12	Lecture 9: Laboratory Safety Administration	
	Apr 14	Lecture 10: QA/QC, Lab Accreditation, FSAT Overview	
14	Apr 19	Lecture 11: Firearms Examination	
	Apr 21	Group Meeting: FSAT Test Prep	
15	Apr 26	FSAT Test (tentative 6:00 – 9:00 PM)	
	Apr 28	FEPAC Exit Surveys	SRTE Participation
16	May 3	No final exam for this course	
	May 5	No final exam for this course	